

MARCH 7.

The President, SAMUEL G. DIXON, M.D., in the Chair.

Fifteen persons present.

The deaths of the following members were announced: Edward Longstreth, February 24, 1905, and J. Dundas Lippincott, March 6, 1905.

The Publication Committee reported that papers under the following titles had been presented for publication:

"Senility among Gasteropods," by Burnett Smith.

"Notes on some Arctic Fishes, with Description of a New *Oncocottus*," by Henry W. Fowler.

*The Utility Principle in Relation to Specific Characters.* — MR. ARTHUR ERWIN BROWN made a communication of which the following is an abstract:

By way of introduction to an argument supporting a broad view of the factors of evolution, such as that taken by Darwin, against the exclusive valuation of Natural Selection urged by Neo-Darwinians, the speaker mentioned that Charles Darwin was elected a correspondent of the Academy on March 27, 1860, the *Origin of Species* having been first published in London on November 24, 1859, and the following extract was read from a letter written by Darwin on May 8, 1860, to Sir Charles Lyell: "This morning I got a letter from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia announcing that I am elected a correspondent. It shows that some naturalists there do not think I am such a scientific profligate as many think me here."

The Academy appears to have been the first among scientific societies to confer its honors upon Darwin after the publication of his immortal work.

The opinion of Alfred Russell Wallace as a leading advocate of Neo-Darwinism, that utility has necessarily been the sole factor in the production of specific characters, was contrasted with Darwin's view, and the difficulty of bringing facts to bear against a logical proposition constructed in the form of a closed circle was pointed out. Many biologists have been led by this difficulty to the hasty conclusion that it is useless to cite cases of apparent inutility in face of it; but this view is unfortunate, for thereby the field is abandoned to the advocates of exclusive utility. Furthermore, the accumulation of probabilities by means of such cases is not only legitimate as a method, but at the present time is about the only one by which the argument can be met.